

**GODSLAYER #2**  
***The Winter King Part II***  
**Written by Brian Holguin**  
**22 Pages + Prose Back Up Story**

**The following words are CQ:**

**BAIRN  
NEVA  
CAERION  
PERREN  
DROMO  
UHMBER  
UREL  
HARVOST  
URSHREK  
EGIL  
AUN  
ELYAR  
ENDRA-LA  
MAGDA'S  
ARCADEAN  
DREADFALL  
ORN**

Well then, here we go... off on issue number two. I'm really happy with number one, but no resting on laurels for us. Let's do our very best to top it right out of the gate.

While the first issue we were laying the groundwork and bringing new readers up to speed, this issue, we're going to concentrate on the Land of Uhmber, the home of the Winter King, and get an idea of the price of living under a brutal god. We want to elicit sympathy for the foul souls who live under his reign. We watch Neva as she slowly loses her mind when she is left behind while the Godslayer goes off on his quest. Plus we get our first meeting with the mysterious Dromo and an exciting and (hopefully) fun action sequence.

Anyway, here we go. Further on, further in...

## **ISSUE #1 RECAP (IFC)**

*Since time before memory, the world of Ur has been ruled a myriad of Gods, competing pantheons that reign over the many kingdoms of man. But from the mists of chaos comes a shadowy menace, an unstoppable marauder who dares challenge the Gods themselves: The Godslayer.*

*Previously: Bairn, the Godslayer, returned to his fortress after his onslaught on his homeland, the island Kingdom of Endra-La. He is followed by the ghost of Neva, his one true beloved, with whom he parted decades ago. Trapped between worlds after her death, Neva struggles to get Bairn to acknowledge her ghostly form. At last the two lovers are reunited and Bairn tells Neva how he came to this fate, the oath he made, and the dark task he is charged with. But their reunion is short-lived as Bairn is summoned once again by his shadowy "master," an unseen Chaos Lord who dispatches the Godslayer on yet another quest. His latest target: Urshrek, the Winter King.*

### **PAGE 1.**

#### **Panel 1.**

Okay, this is going to be three page-wide panels, stacked on top of each other, with three narrow strips between the major panels. Begin with an establishing shot of the Godslayer's fortress, a dark cruel hand reaching out of the sea, cold and stark against the mist-laden night sky. We hear Neva's narration.

**CAPTION:** The Fortress of the Godslayer...

**CAPTION (Neva):** I am ALONE, once again. Deep in the tomb of this Godless place.

**CAPTION (Neva):** He said he must leave. His master had spoken.

**CAPTION (Neva):** He swore he would take me with him, and lead me out of this damnable place.

**CAPTION (Neva):** Over the BRIDGE OF MISTS to...  
WHEREVER he was sent.

### **Panel 2.**

This is a narrow strip between the previous panel and the next. It is mostly darkness, slightly obscured by mist. We see GS's gauntleted hand reaching from the left of panel and holding tightly to Neva's slender hand, which comes in from the right.

**GODSLAYER:** Don't let go.

**CAPTION:** I can still hear his warning.

### **Panel 3.**

Inside the fortress, we see Neva crouched in the dark, sitting next to the throne in the throne room. She's terrified, left alone by the Godslayer, left in this strange, otherworldly limbo with no idea when he'll come back.

**CAPTION (Neva):** I can feel the icy touch of the MISTS as they writhe and churn all around us. I feel TIME stretch and crawl to stop...

**CAPTION (Neva):** Then I feel his hand DISSOLVE into nothingness beneath my grip.

**CAPTION (Neva):** And he is GONE.

### **Panel 4.**

Another narrow panel. In the darkness, Neva's hand is slipping from GS, her fingertips struggling to maintain contact.

**NEVA:** Bairn...

### **Panel 5.**

Again, on Neva in the present, slumped against the throne. Close in now, on Neva's face. Her eyes are welling with tears.

**CAPTION (Neva):** And I am still here. ALONE.

**CAPTION (Neva):** Once again.

### **Panel 6.**

One last narrow strip. We see how GS's hand has slipped from Neva's grasp, her fingers reaching in the dark for something that is not there. The mist thickens and obscures the scene.

**NEVA:** BAIRN! NO!

## **PAGE 2.**

### **Panel 1.**

Begin with a wide shot of a harsh and desolate mountain pass. It is a rocky terrain punctuated by the twisted skeletons of trees that are singed and charred. Here and there are burn marks on the ground, blackening the scrubby turf, as if a wild fire had passed through recently. There are also bits of bone and shards of crushed skulls littered around. We don't necessarily take this all in in the first panel, but this is just to let you know what the landscape is as we move through the scene. It is a cold, gray afternoon. There are patches of snow on the ground and a heavy, unearthly mist hangs like a curtain in the air.

**CAPTION:** The CAERION PASS, north of the lands of Perren...

### **Panel 2.**

Same angle. A silhouette is now visible in the distance emerging/materializing from the mist. It is the GODSLAYER and he is alone, sword in one hand, no helmet.

**GODSLAYER (small):** neva...?

### **Panel 3.**

Same angle again, but now GS has fully emerged from the mist and we can make him out clearly. He shouts Neva's name again and surprised to hear a response, a voice from off panel.

**GODSLAYER:** NEVA!

**VOICE (off panel):** Hello?

**Panel 4.**

GS has stopped, listening to the voice. His expression indicates it's not the voice he was expecting.

**GODLAYER:** Who's there?

**Panel 5.**

Closer on GS. He holds his sword at the ready, trying to see where the voice is coming from. The mist is starting to fade away.

**VOICE (off panel):** HELLO! OVER HERE! “

**PAGE 3.**

**Panel 1.**

Large panel of a man hanging upside down. This is DROMO. There is a large gibbet and Dromo is dangling from it with one foot held in a manacle. His hands are bound behind his back and his free leg bent at an angle so the sole of the foot is resting against the knee of the other leg. (The image invokes the HANGED MAN from the traditional Tarot deck.)

Dromo is dressed in leather traveling clothes – pants, jacket, etc. – that have all seen better days. His boots have evidently been stolen, as he is presently barefoot. Dromo has the immediate appearance of a wanderer, a rogue, a man of the open road. He looks agile and athletic – or at least he would, if he wasn't bound up at the moment. He's probably a little taller than average height, but certainly shorter than the Godslayer. He is handsome and charming in a rough sort of way, a likable rogue in contrast to the aloof, aristocratic Bairn. I envision him to somewhat resemble a young Tim Roth (from around the time of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*.) Sandy colored hair, ruddy complexion, a lively glint in his eye.

Although we obviously can't see it at this point, there is an image of an EYE tattooed on the palm of each of his hands. Dromo is in fact, a thief, a murderer and Demigod, although none of which should seem immediately apparent, except perhaps for the thief part. Despite his current predicament, Dromo has a devil-may-care grin on his face as he addresses GS (who is probably off panel at this point.)

**DROMO:** Looks like it's my LUCKY DAY!

**Panel 2.**

On GS as he approaches the prisoner. GS is standing up, looking down at Dromo. Dromo's head is roughly level with GS's kneecaps. Right away, we get the sense that Dromo is a bit of bullshit artist.

**GODSLAYER:** What means this?

**DROMO:** I seem to have found myself in a SPOT OF TROUBLE. Long story really.

**DROMO:** If you could help me out, I'd be much obliged.

**Panel 3.**

GS has now dropped down on one knee, maybe leaning on his sword, so that he and Dromo are roughly eye to eye. Dromo's turning on the charm; GS's face is stone, unimpressed.

**GODSLAYER:** You've done something to deserve this fate?

**DROMO:** I don't know if I would say DESERVE... We are all GUILTY of something, are we not?

**DROMO:** But some PUNISHMENTS are out of all PROPORTION to the crime. But I'll make you a proposal...

**Panel 4.**

Same angle as above. Dromo really starts laying it on.

**DROMO:** If you leave me here, maybe justice is done, or maybe an INNOCENT perishes. But if you FREE ME...

**DROMO:** Well, I'll tell you my story. Confess my crimes. And then if you decide I still deserve it, you can go ahead and KILL ME YOURSELF. Nothing more FAIR than that.

### **Panel 5.**

Up shot of GS, silhouetted by the sun. Crows circle in the sky above him.

**GODSLAYER:** I don't care to involve myself in the affairs of others. Perhaps you should plea your case to the vultures and the crows.

### **Panel 6.**

Close on Dromo, who wears a nervous grin and sort of nods awkwardly with his head to point in the direction directly behind GS.

**DROMO:** It's not the CROWS I'm worried about, friend...

## **PAGE 4.**

### **Panel 1.**

BIG PANEL shot of the CAERION WOLF, a particularly deadly mythical being, as it emerges from behind a jagged outcropping of the stone. (Perhaps we see GS in this shot in foreground, dwarfed by the creature, but more likely this is a GS p.o.v. shot.) The Wolf is huge, 12 to 15 feet at the shoulder, rows of razor-sharp teeth, bristly spines that grow out of its pelt. Bright orange eyes burn like coals.

**CAPTION (Dromo):** "It's THAT..."

### **Panel 2.**

Smaller panel along the bottom of the page shows GS's reaction. His sword is immediately at the ready.

No copy.

## **PAGE 5.**

### **Panel 1.**

In the Land of UHMBER... A snowy winter landscape, wind sweeping drifts of snowflakes through the frozen air. There is a man on a mule, hands bound behind him, coming straight towards us. The man's head hangs down dejectedly, and the eyes of the mule have been put out

with a torch. This is the FATHER from last issue. His name, by the way, is UREL. His face is a mix defiance and defeat. This is a man who has lost everything and knows it, but it is also a man who is not going to beg for mercy.

**CAPTION:** The Kingdom of UHMBER...

**CAPTION:** Urel of Harvost shivers against the morning cold and closes his eyes.

## **Panel 2.**

Flashback now to a couple days earlier. Establish the village we saw in the previous issue. It is dusk. Lamplight glows along the cobbled streets and a casual stream of people carrying candles approach a large building. The building is a holy gathering place, like a long lodge hall. It is a kind of church or temple.

**CAPTION:** Closes his eyes and REMEMBERS. It was yesterday...

**CAPTION:** The village had gathered at the GREAT HALL to honor the dead. To remember the children whose SOULS were taken on the night of LONG SHADOWS.

## **Panel 3.**

Inside the long hall, there are pillars and cross beams crisscrossing the roofline, and inscribed with subtle BEAR motifs. There is a large set of double doors at one end and no windows. The main focus, however, are the several long, narrow tables laid out along the length of the room. On the tables are the bodies of children – anywhere from newborn babes to six or seven years old. They are a dozen or so all together, wrapped in white shrouds. There are numerous candles burning on the tables to illuminate the scene. The bodies are laid here to honor their sacrifice, the souls that Winter took so that the rest of them might survive the season. It is too cold to bury the corpses in the ground so they lay here all winter in a sign of veneration. Old women sprinkles herbs and flowers over the corpses and villagers file past paying their respects and offering their condolences to those who lost family members. This scene is just one of many that taking place in villages through the kingdom of Uhmbur.

**CAPTION:** All that DEATH in one place.



**CAPTION:** It is TOO COLD to bury them in the ground.

**CAPTION:** They are laid out on long oak tables, draped in linen. Their tiny corpses sprinkled with sage and meadowsweet.

**Panel 4.**

Same angle. A hush goes over the place and all eyes turns towards the door.

**CAPTION:** It is a somber scene. Every tongue is reverent, mutterings prayers to comfort the living...

**CAPTION:** And giving THANKS that more were not taken.

**Panel 5.**

Urel has entered the room, from the double doors, letting the winter chill in. He is carrying the body of his dead child in his arms. It is not ritually wrapped like the others so that everyone can clearly see that is a dead human being and not some abstraction of sacrifice. The Winter King took his last child, the last member of his family and left him with nothing. He is not here to pay respects. Rather, he is like a dog beaten once to often and ready to bite back.

**CAPTION:** Every tongue except one.

**UREL:** He took my child. My SON is gone.

**PAGE 6.**

**Panel 1.**

Urel steps into the center of the room and the other villagers react. A couple of neighbors approach him cautiously to offer sympathies, but the rest back away and cast their eyes down. His fate could be their fate and they know. Urel starts speaking, quietly, but with contempt, about how this ritual is a hollow sham.

**VILLAGER:** Our prayers are with you, Urel. But you must be strong. You must be strong for your OTHER son.

**UREL:** I HAVE NO SON! I made a sacrifice, in secret. I offered up Egil so that Aun might be SPARED.

**VILLAGER 2:** What?!

**UREL:** Was the KING displeased? Was he INSULTED by my offer of the weaker son?

**Panel 2.**

Urel lays the child down on a tabletop and continues his diatribe. Even those closest to him are backing away now and Urel decries his fellow villagers, fellow countrymen as cowards.

**UREL:** NO! He is just CRUEL!

**UREL:** He offers us hardship and we call it WISDOM. He offers misery and we call it KINDNESS!

**UREL:** What sad, pathetic FOOLS we are!

**Panel 3.**

Urel loses his temper now, knocking over a number of candles on a nearby tabletop with a violent sweep of his hand.

**UREL:** Whose CHILD is this? Or this? This is not an honor! This is MURDER!

**UREL:** How do you bear to LIVE under the yoke of such TYRANNY.

**VILLAGER:** Blasphemy!

**Panel 4.**

Urel continues his rant, now over turning tables in a frantic rage. The villagers are panicking. Such things are not said and he will surely bring the wrath of Urshrek down upon all of them.

**VILLAGER:** Stop it, fool! Would you bring his WRATH down on all of US!

**UREL:** What do I care of his WRATH? What more can he take from me!

### **Panel 5.**

Urel falls to his knees, fists clenched, bellowing to the heavens, screaming to brutal God and challenging him for his cruel ways. Villagers stand back as far away as possible, hands covering their mouths in horror, terrified of what Urel's actions will bring down on them.

**UREL:** Hear me, URSHREK! Others may call you KING, but I call you MONSTER!

**UREL:** You are my ENEMY and I will pray for your DEATH!

### **PAGE 7.**

#### **Panel 1.**

Okay. Now, back to Godslayer and the Big Fucking Wolf... The beast charges at GS, snapping its jaws and missing him by inches.

**SFX:** KRUNNCH!

#### **Panel 2.**

GS gracefully steps to one side so that he can swing at the neck of the creature as it passes. As GS lands his blow the beast DISAPPATES into a cloudburst of blue/gray smoke that is laced with bright ribbons of orange/red fire.

**GODSLAYER:** What WITCHERY is this? It turns to SMOKE!

#### **Panel 3.**

GS looks around, trying to figure out what happened. We see the smoke begin re-shape behind him. Dromo calls out a warning, but not soon enough...

**DROMO:** On your right, friend. ON YOUR RIGHT!

#### **Panel 4.**

The Wolf has materialized again and smacks GS with a powerful forepaw in the back, sending him sprawling.

**GODSLAYER:** Uff!

**Panel 5.**

The beast has turned again and begins sniffing in Dromo's direction. Dromo thrashes in his bonds trying to shoo the beast away. "Get! Get away!"

**SFX:** Grrrrrr

**DROMO:** Good doggie... hah... there's a GOOD BOY...  
Nice... Giant... Monstrous...

**PAGE 8.**

**Panel 1.**

GS is on his feet again, approaching the beast from its flank. The wolf turns its attention away from Dromo.

No copy.

**Panel 2.**

The wolf turns to strike again and shifts its form so that once again the wolf's open jaws are behind GS. GS tries to turn and reorient himself to defend against the strike.

No copy.

**Panel 3.**

On Dromo, as he shouts at GS, telling him where to watch out for the attack.

**DROMO:** BEHIND YOU! IT'S RIGHT BEHIND --

**Panel 4.**

GS tries to swing at the beast while its jaws snatch him up in the air and sends him flying.

No copy.

**Panel 5.**

GS crashes with a violent impact into the Dromo and the gibbet he hangs from.

**DROMO:** YAAAUH!

**PAGE 9.**

**Panel 1.**

The gibbet has been reduced to a pile of broken timber. Getting back up to his feet, GS cuts the chain that holds Dromo's leg while hauling Dromo up from the ground.

**DROMO:** I don't mean to sound UNGRATEFUL... but when I asked you to cut me LOOSE...

**Panel 2.**

The wolf approaches them, backing them up into a narrow hallow between rocks. GS has holds the sword in one hand, holding on to Dromo with the other (by the manacles that still bind Dromo's hands), brandishing Dromo like a shield between GS and the Wolf.

**DROMO:** This isn't quite what I IMAGINED!

**Panel 3.**

GS uses Dromo as bait/shield pulling the wolf further back between rocks, so that essentially the wolf can only move into two directions - forward and back - with no lateral motion. GS hides as best he can behind Dromo.

**GODSLAYER:** Quiet, fool!

**Panel 4.**

GS leans Dromo forward, dangling him like a steak to starving hound. Dromo's eyes widen a bit at this point, but he's still keeping his cool.

**GODSLAYER:** YOU! This is what you WANTED, BEAST? It is YOURS! Come and FETCH IT!

**GODSLAYER:** That's it... A little closer now...

**Panel 5.**

The Wolf LUNGES right at Dromo now, maw wide open, ready to swallow him in a single bite. Dromo's eyes are shut and he flinches, ready for the jaws to crush him...

**GODSLAYER:** Just a little...

**PAGE 10.**

**Panel 1.**

BOOM! In a single move, GS yanks Dromo back and lunges at the beast, meeting its momentum with his own, before the wolf can change into smoke again. The wolf's teeth slam shut on empty air as GS drives his sword into the creature's eye.

**GODSLAYER:** ...CLOSER!

**Panel 2.**

The creature howls in pain while beginning to fade into smoke.

**SFX:** AAOOOOOO!

**Panel 3.**

Inset: GS cuts the bounds that hold Dromo's hands behind his back.

**SFX:** Phhft

**Panel 4.**

Two shot of Dromo and GS. Dromo rubs his wrists and suggests they make themselves scarce.

**DROMO:** Well played, stranger. I am IMPRESSED. But WOUNDED or not, I doubt the beast will stay away for long.

**GODSLAYER:** I think you're right.

### **Panel 5.**

Dromo looks back over his shoulder to make sure the beast isn't following them. GS has already started on his way, walking with strength and purpose.

**DROMO:** I am called DROMO, by the way. What is your name, friend?

**GODSLAYER:** I am NOT your friend.

### **PAGE 11.**

#### **Panel 1.**

The Fortress of the Godslayer... Neva stands at one of the towers – the natural openings in the sides of the fortress – looking out into the dark. The moons glow faintly behind curtains of mist. This place is a cruel hell. The moons rise and fall, but the sun never shines. Eternal darkness, eternal gloom.

**CAPTION (Neva):** What have I done to deserve this?

**CAPTION:** Was I not chaste and pure and obedient? Did I not give up my life, my station, my prospects, all to serve as VESSEL to the GODDESS?

#### **Panel 2.**

Cut to Neva walking through a great cavern, eerie shadow dance along the walls, while she is dwarfed in the frame. Somehow, now she is damned to this cold hell, again left behind, in her solitude, wishing her beloved would return.

**CAPTION:** Now my DEATH has become a cruel parody of my LIFE.

**CAPTION:** Once again, it is I who am left behind, alone, to wait patiently...

#### **Panel 3.**

Neva stands before one of the items in the “trophy room” – the Crown or the Hammer, say – examining it. The realization that these are the last remnants of dead gods is falling on her. His darkness, this

loneliness, the utter negation of hope that his place represents is slowly driving her mad. She's helpless and lost, and not even alive. A ghost haunting a god-forsaken palace.

**CAPTION:** Here, in this cloistered hell, surrounded by the relics of DEAD GODS.

**CAPTION:** But I am OUT of patience.

**CAPTION:** This place, it wears at me. The very air seethes with madness. Its walls echo with horrors.

#### **Panel 4.**

Neva crumples in a heap next to the throne, unable to take it anymore.

**CAPTION:** How could HE bare it all those years? How could he not go MAD?

**CAPTION:** Oh yes. That's right.

**CAPTION:** I wouldn't dare.

**CAPTION:** Would I?

#### **Panel 5.**

Closer on Neva. She speaks in a whisper, considering the words she is about to say, weighing the price of uttering them

**NEVA:** Bring me...

#### **Panel 6.**

Close in now, on her face, perhaps just her mouth. She speaks with conviction now.

**NEVA:** Bring me the CHALICE and the PEARL... to DULL my mind and... DROWN my senses... please....

#### **Panel 7.**

The items - a GOBLET of ink-colored wine and moon-white PEARL appear on a tray on a table or surface near her.



**NEVA:** Thank you.

**PAGE 12.**

**Panel 1**

GS and Dromo striding quickly along the barren mountainside. They make an odd pair, the powerful, armored noble of Endra-La and desolate ruffian. Dromo is hobbling -- between the stones and the snow, his feet are in sad state.

**DROMO:** You are of the ELYAR, are you not? From ENDRA-LA? I can tell. The way you carry yourself. So PROUD and LOFTY.

**DROMO:** You are FAR from home.

**GODSLAYER:** I seek a kingdom called UHMBER. Have you heard of it?

**DROMO:** Hold a moment.

**Panel 2.**

In foreground, Dromo sits on a large rock and begins to strip rags from his shirt. He talks to GS, who keeps a wary distance, asking him about his destination.

**DROMO:** Uhmber? Aye. A few days travel by foot. More if you wish to avoid being eaten by giant, shape-shifting WOLVES.

**GODSLAYER:** Can you show me?

**DROMO:** It's the LEAST I can do. Do you want the SHORTEST, the EASIEST or the SAFEST route?

**GODSLAYER:** Shortest.

**Panel 3.**

Dromo has wrapped the rags around his feet, to give them some sort of covering. Their conversation continues. Dromo somehow manages to be ingratiating and mocking at the same time.

**DROMO:** Done. I thought you Elyar were WORLDLY people. Educated and such. The frozen piss-stain of Uhmer isn't on your maps?

**GODSLAYER:** My race seldom troubled itself with the fates of LESSER KINGDOMS.

#### **Panel 4.**

Dromo stands, testing his makeshift foot coverings. GS asks him why he was strung up and left for dead. It is time for Dromo to confess his crimes.

**DROMO:** Fair enough. They don't come much "lesser" than Uhmer. Ah, That's much better. Bastards took my BOOTS, can you believe it?

**GODSLAYER:** What was your crime?

**DROMO:** THIEVERY. I confess it. I stole... well... SOMETHING.

#### **Panel 5.**

Dromo gestures with kind of shrug. (This is probably the first time we see the EYES drawn on his hands).

**DROMO:** No. Wait. That's a lie. I DIDN'T steal it. I only TRIED to steal it. And it's not as if anyone would have MISSED it.

**DROMO:** Perren savages, what do they do? They can't LOP off my hand like CIVILIZED people? No, they try and FEED ME to their PHANTOM HOUND!

**DROMO:** I ask you, is that JUSTICE. Is it?

#### **Panel 6.**

GS doesn't respond to the question. Instead he turns and continues on his course as Dromo lags behind because of his lack of proper foot ware.

**GODSLAYER:** Keep up.

**PAGE 13.**

**Panel 1.**

It is night now. GS and Dromo sit beneath a giant oak tree, a fire burning, their shapes silhouetted in the dark. Mountains roll off in the distance. Wide shot of Dromo and GS, facing each other across the fire. GS gives Dromo an icy look. If Dromo notices, it doesn't deter him.

**DROMO:** So Elyar, who are you off to KILL then?

**GODSLAYER:** What did you say?

**DROMO:** Please. Fellow like you, draped in armor, strange eyes, SWORD the size of SHIP'S MAST...  
*Somebody's in for a bad ending.*

**Panel 2.**

Dromo shrugs as GS leans back against the tree trunk. He is weary, not from the travel or the fight, but from the thought of his separation from Neva. Dromo changes the subject and mentions an inn called MAGDA's – a place that's "not too close but not too far" – where they can get a room for the night. (Okay, a bit about Magda's, just to give you a head's up: We don't see it in this issue, but it will figure into future stories. Magda's is an inn, a safe house for villains, rogues and thieves. It is enchanted by the owner, the witch Magda, so that it exists nowhere and everywhere all at once. Those who know they way can approach it from anywhere, any road, any city. Those who don't will never find it even if they looked for a thousand years.)

**DROMO:** Listen, friend. As appealing as this rocky, wind-blasted WASTELAND is, there's a TAVERN I know of. MAGDA'S. Have you heard of it? Grand place, Magda's.

**DROMO:** Now, it's not exactly near, but it's not exactly FAR, either. It would take us a bit out of our way, but it's worth it.

**DROMO:** BED... FOOD... WINE... WOMEN... All for the asking!

**Panel 3.**

Dromo stretches out on the ground, trying to make himself comfortable. He continues to make small talk, but again, he seems to instinctively know what GS is thinking.

**GODSLAYER:** No.

**DROMO:** As you wish. Of course, that wouldn't interest you, would it? WOMEN, I mean.

**Panel 4.**

Downshot of Dromo stretched, gabbing away.

**DROMO:** Fellow like you, I bet you have a lovely girl back home, don't you? Beautiful? Wise? Mild as an Arcadean summer? I could have guessed.

**DROMO:** I wager she's standing by the window, right at this moment, staring at the ocean...

**DROMO:** ...just wondering when the tide will bring her beloved, green-eyed, foul-mood, stone-faced, no-sense-of-humor...

**Panel 5.**

GS waves him off, like a superior gesturing to a subordinate to be silent.

**GODSLAYER:** Enough prattle. Tell me of Uhmber. Tell me of the WINTER KING.

**PAGE 14.**

**Panel 1.**

On Dromo who seems surprised by the question. He sits up, rubs his chin as he considers his answer. The Winter King, he tells him is a cruel bastard, even for a god. Not one to be messed with.

**DROMO:** The Winter King? Well, there's a pleasant tale...

**DROMO:** Now, Uhmber may be a desolate, frozen DUNG-HEAP, but that doesn't mean you should underestimate its GODS.

## **Panel 2.**

Dromo leans in closer towards the fire. He holds up the index finger on each hand, to indicate one god rising, and one god descending. He explains that Uhmber is in fact ruled by twin Gods.

**DROMO:** The kingdom is ruled by TWO GODS. Brothers. TWINS they say. First is the SUMMER KING, who rules for the lesser part of the year.

**DROMO:** They say he is a kind and mild sovereign who smiles gently on his kingdom, such as it is.

**DROMO:** But the other... URSHREK... he reigns for the greater portion of the year, and is said to be a TYRANT.

## **Panel 3.**

Angle favoring GS now, as he listens to Dromo explaining:

**GODSLAYER:** A tyrant? What do you mean?

**DROMO:** Well, as I have heard it, the Summer King is content with sacrifices of grains and fruit left on the altar. But the Winter King is not so easily pleased.

**DROMO:** He's a CANNIBAL, that's what he is. Human sacrifices, babes stolen in the night, all of that. The stuff of NIGHTMARES.

## **Panel 4.**

Angle on Dromo again, bathed in the red glow of the firelight. He is holding his hands up to the fire to warm them, the effect being that the eyes drawn on his hands are weirdly illuminated by the glow.

**DROMO:** Now ALL GODS are BASTARDS, if you ask me. But URSHREK is worse than most. Who needs them, the Gods?

**DROMO:** The way they treat mortals like playthings, turning their lives to TRAGEDY for their own amusement... A PLAGUE on ALL of them, that's what I say.

**Panel 5.**

Same as above. Dromo still holds his palms up but lowers his finger tips in a manner that subtly suggests eyes closing. Seems our Dromo has no small measure of magic himself.

**DROMO:** But enough of my rantings. We've quite journey ahead of us tomorrow. I'm sure you're wanting SLEEP...

**Panel 6.**

On GS, who now seems unable to keep eyes open, just about to drift off to sleep.

**GODSLAYER:** mmmn...

**PAGE 15.**

**Panel 1.**

Meanwhile, in the Kingdom of Uhmer... We see UREL as he sits in a rough prison cell. It is a small, stone room with a small barred window letting in a little light. He sits in the corner, knees drawn up to his chest. Even his neighbors have deserted him now.

**CAPTION:** The gray light of dawn creeps through the cold iron bars of Urel's prison cell. His last hours have not been filled with idleness.

**Panel 2.**

We move in closer and see that Urel is doing something with his hands, weaving a sigil or spell with woolen threads pulled from his shirt. His face shows no expression; he is dead inside.

**CAPTION:** His grandmother was a WITCH WOMAN and he had learned something of her craft when he was young.

**Panel 3.**

Close up of his hands. We can see more clearly what he is doing. He is weaving a kind of elaborate knot or braid, a bit of folk magic that has been passed down to him through his family. It is in effect a cross between a voodoo doll and rosary beads. He is praying for unknown forces to deliver him and his people from the tyranny of Urshrek.

**CAPTION:** His fingers move with confidence despite the cold. Braiding threads... fixing knots... plaiting courses...

**CAPTION:** He focuses his will, binding it to the WISH-WEAVING. Perhaps something, somewhere will hear his pleas, and answer them.

**CAPTION:** And DOOM will come at last for the WINTER KING.

#### **Panel 4.**

Sunrise, the next morning. A crowd has gathered at the edge of the village. Urel has been put astride an old mule, a doddering old thing at the end of its days. What's more, it has had its eyes put out with torches so that it is blind.

**CAPTION:** The MULE is scrubbed with coarse salt and lashed with thorns before its EYES are put out with a torch.

#### **Panel 5.**

Several people in the crowd slap at and poke at the blind mule with sticks, spurring it away from the village, taking Urel and his curse out into the wild. He is being sent into banishment, left to the elements.

**CAPTION:** Urel is set atop the blind beast, hands bound. They curse him, his neighbors. They spit and throw stones.

**CAPTION:** He is BANISHED from their midst. Excised. Sent into the wild, taking his cursed luck and crude blasphemies with him.

#### **Panel 6.**

As the blind mule carries Urel out past the boundaries of the village, villages stand and throw stones and call out curses after it as it heads out into the frozen countryside.

**CAPTION:** His home and wares are forfeit and his name will never be spoken again, except perhaps sometimes, late at night...

**CAPTION:** ... and only then to scare willful children into obedience.

## **PAGE 16.**

### **Panel 1.**

Urel on his mule heading out into the wilderness. We can see the village faintly in the far distance. Snow is falling, the sky is heavy with clouds and crows circle high above.

**CAPTION:** Urel's skin is raw from the harsh wind and his eyes grow dim from staring at the endless, pale horizon.

### **Panel 2.**

Later still... A different angle. We're far into the wilderness now, the lights of the village have long vanished. The snow begins to fall in heavy droves and the wind kicks up violently.

**CAPTION:** But he does not cry out. He is done with begging.

### **Panel 3.**

Large panel. The man and the mule are alone in the snowy white landscape. A few bare trees around, mountains far in the distance. The blizzard is raging now and the torrents of snow, the swirl of clouds and the arc of crows' flight all seem to conspire to form an image/silhouette of the Winter King. It is a dreadful image, the angry God looming over Urel and his ride, come to take his vengeance.

**CAPTION:** He will meet his own DOOM like a man.

**CAPTION:** Greet it face to face

**CAPTION:** And he will SPIT in its EYE.

## **PAGE 17.**



It is early morning now. The Godslayer is standing up, looking about the camp. The fire is out and Dromo is nowhere to be seen. GS's face shows the slightest hint of disappointment.

No copy.

### **Panel 2.**

On GS as he looks in a direction, reacting to a sound.

**DROMO (off):** Elyar! GOOD MORNING!

### **Panel 3.**

Dromo shows up now with a pair of fine horses – one roan, the other jet black. Dromo is atop the roan. He has a shiny pair of new boots and heavy coat and a pair of leather gloves. He's grinning like a Cheshire cat.

**DROMO:** I BRING GIFTS! Are they not BEAUTIFUL?

**GODSLAYER:** You STOLE horses?

**DROMO:** Not just horses...

### **Panel 4.**

As GS protests, as Dromo begins to step down from his steed. And look, he says, pointing to several items hanging from the saddle of his steed. There are leather pouches and wine skins, a strange looking scabbard holding a sword, and a kind of pistol made of carved ivory. The pistol looks a bit like an ancient Chinese cannon, with a dragon mouth for a barrel, but smaller, the maybe a two-feet or less in length.

**DROMO:** Food! Wine! Weapons! And boots! GLORIOUS BOOTS! It's FOUL and FREEZING where we're going!

**DROMO:** And don't worry, the horses were STOLEN to begin with. I plucked them at Magda's. Trust me, no one there could afford such fine steeds.

**DROMO:** But if it eases your conscience, we can return them to their previous thieves when we're done.

### **Panel 5.**

Dromo grinning, finishing up his sale's pitch. He's a smooth little fucker.

**DROMO:** What do you say? We'll make much better time... Get you back to your WOMAN sooner...

**Panel 6.**

On Godslayer as he considers this.

No copy.

**Panel 7.**

Wide shot. The two of them ride off over hills.

**CAPTION:** And so they rode, the Godslayer and his guide...

**PAGE 18.**

**Panel 1.**

This begins a kind of travelogue sequence, as they cover much ground in the span of the day. We're also trying to convey how vast and varied a world our heroes inhabit. We start with the morning... a long shot, the two of them make their way along the foot of large hill. The hill is made of rough, rocky stone and seems to be formed in the shape of great GIANT, club slung over his back, hundreds of feet tall, that was turned to stone millennia ago. Bits of heather and scrub trees dot the giants form. The sun is just ascending in the sky.

**CAPTION:** Across the Steppes of Longing... into the Valley of Dead Tears...

**CAPTION:** Past TITANS HILL...

**Panel 2.**

Midday. The pair ride through a broad path in a forest of mammoth trees that make the great Red Woods look like garden shrubs. The branches twist in gnarled curves above, joining together to make a strangely beautiful canopy. The ghosts of scores of HANGED MEN dangle from nooses high in the trees. Dromo looks at them and rubs his own neck in sympathy. GS doesn't seem to notice.

**CAPTION:** Through the dark heart of TRAITORS' WOOD...

**DROMO:** >gulp!<

**Panel 3.**

Afternoon. The pair edge along the rim of a cliff, single file, GS in front. Below them, the cliff face descends in a vertiginous plunge a thousand feet down to a great rushing river. They are at such a height that clouds and circling bird can be seen in the space between them and the mammoth river far below.

**CAPTION:** Along the DREADFALL PASS... From the break of day, to the dying of the sun, they rode.

**CAPTION:** Whatever troubled thoughts stormed through his mind, the Godslayer kept to himself.

**CAPTION:** And his companion, after a time, learned to hold his tongue.

**PAGE 19.**

**Panel 1.**

Neva in the fortress. We see her slumped against the throne, one arm tossed carelessly over the armrest of the throne, head resting languidly against her forearm. The goblet lies knocked over, empty.

No copy.

**Panel 2.**

Close in on her eyes, barely more than slits, that look out into darkness with a heavy, narcotic stupor, trying desperately to focus on someone or something in the near distance.

**VOICE (off):** Why do you cry, child?

**NEVA:** Who... Who are you?

**Panel 3.**

From Neva's p.o.v.: We see a Neva's younger self – a young girl, pretty, about seven or eight, dressed the silken clothes of the royal house of Endra-La. She stands in front of Neva, looking at her.

**GIRL:** You do not recognize me?

**NEVA (no pointer):** You look so familiar? Are you one of my sisters?

**Panel 4.**

Same angle, but little girl has changed into the old Neva (as seen in GS one-shot) looking straight at Neva (that is to say, straight at the reader)

**OLD NEVA:** Oh, dear child...What has he DONE to you?

**Panel 5.**

Exact same angle again, but now the Neva is replaced by the Goddess Llyra. Fire rings her head and she reaches out four hands extended in sympathy.

**GODDESS:** He has BETRAYED you! How can you STILL LOVE him?

**GODDESS:** How can you not HATE him?

**Panel 6.**

Same angle. It is the girl again, but she is changing. Her head and shoulders remain the same as panel three, but her body begins to shift and fade, superimposed by the image of an inky, multi-tendriled form, covered with cold luminous eyes.

**GIRL:** Perhaps we can make a BARGAIN...

**PAGE 20.**

**Panel 1.**

Late afternoon/early evening. We see GS and Dromo on horseback on a snow draped ridge, looking out a cross a great chasm. Dromo gestures towards the other side.

**DROMO:** There it is, across that span... The Kingdom of UHMBER!

**DROMO:** Lovely isn't it? Miles and miles of frozen waste and epic misery!

**Panel 2.**

Aerial shot, looking down at a wide bridge that spans a vast rock chasm, linking to the realm of Uhmbur. The two riders have entered the bridge. The bridge is made of interlocking spokes of wood and tusk. It is not overly elaborate or ornate, but it is impressive in an engineering and architectural sense. It is more than wide enough for two horses to ride side by side, although GS is still ahead of Dromo by a short distance.

No copy.

**Panel 3.**

Looking past the two riders, from behind, as they near the far end of the bridge. On the other side a vast expanse of snow-capped hills dotted by the bare skeletons of leafless trees. There is something waiting for them at the far side of the bridge. From this distance it looks very much like a man sitting on a mule.

**DROMO:** Look. Someone waits at the other side.

**GODSLAYER:** A sentry?

**Panel 4.**

As they draw nearer, angle on GS and Dromo, who are now abreast of each other, looking at the thing at the end of the bridge. GS's face is troubled and Dromo is aghast.

**GS:** Orn's Beard...

**DROMO:** What is that THING?

**Panel 5.**

Largish panel. We see the THING at the far side of the bridge. It is an ungodly sight, but we can clearly make out that it was once the man UREL and the MULE. Picture the man and rider, frozen stiff, exposed to the elements. Large parts of the flesh eaten away by crows, exposing

the bone underneath. The flesh that remains is blue and frozen and ghoulish. Delicate tracteries of ice and rime hang like cobwebs everywhere. The mule's head is mostly skull, but the rider still has almost half his flesh on this face. But more than the exposure to the elements, the thing has been crudely altered, meddled together by some harsh magic. The bones of beast and rider are fused together, ribs stick out at sick angles and are covered with bony spurs. Flesh, bone and sinew are fused together and misshapen, making a mockery of what was once human. It is a hideous grotesquerie, and it is a warning, an omen for those who would challenge the Winter King. Make this as fucked up and disgusting as you like, just make sure we can still tell what this thrice-damned thing once was. It speaks, but the voice comes from the beast, not the man.

**THING (special voice, coming from mule's mouth):**  
Let these BONES stand as WARNING to those who would tempt the wrath of URSHREK!

**THING:** Let this FOUL WRETCH bare witness to the might of the WINTER KING!

## **PAGE 21.**

### **Panel 1.**

Focus on the Thing as it speaks a warning. Again, the voice comes from not from the rider, but from the beast. The dead eye sockets of that which was once mule glow with an eerie cold light.

**THING (From mule mouth):** URSHREK, who stalks the night like a shadow, who steals the child from the crib. Who drinks of DARKNESS and feasts on the SUN!

**THING:** URSHREK, whose mercy shall not be questioned and whose WILL is SURPREME!

**THING:** TREMBLE before his NAME and know that his EYES are EVERYWHERE! For these LANDS ARE HIS...

### **Panel 2.**

Push in closer now. The beast continues its warning.

**THING:** ...and his WORD IS LAW!

**Panel 3.**

Same again. The Beast's eyes cease glowing as it ends its soliloquy, and stands still and silent, it's message delivered.

No copy.

**Panel 4.**

Focus on the part that was once Urel, as the misshapen head tries to move what's left of its mouth.

**VOICE (normal, from human mouth now):** ...please...

**Panel 5.**

Two shot of GS and Dromo, still on horseback. They exchange a wary look.

No copy.

**Panel 6.**

Close on the twisted, misshapen face of That Which Was Once Urel. It slowly, painfully manages to get out two pleading words: "End... me..."

**VOICE:** ...end... me...

**PAGE 22.**

**Panel 1.**

GS does just that, slashing into the abomination with his sword twain and ending the poor creature's suffering.

No copy.

**Panel 2.**

The vile thing collapses into a heap of bone and hide and rags and ice.

**GODSLAYER (off):** 'Tis done.

**Panel 3.**

Angle on the two of them, their breath hanging in the air. Dromo stares into space while GS turns to address him soberly.

**DROMO:** Poor bastard...

**GODSLAYER:** I thank you for your service, DROMO, but I think it is time we parted ways. I'm afraid I have just DRAWN ATTENTION to myself...

**Panel 4.**

We see GS ride off into the distance into a snow-covered landscape dotted by bare trees. He is followed closely by Dromo. They are not moving too quickly as the deep snow impedes the horses. They are in the middle distance, backs to us. We can see the shadows of surrounding trees start to grow and stretch.

**DROMO:** Not on your life, Elyar...

**Panel 5.**

The pair of them riding off in the snow, disappearing in the distance. The shadows stretch after them, unseen, like greedy, evil little fingers...

**DROMO:** I can't WAIT to see what HAPPENS NEXT.

END.



## **GODSLAYER #2 BACK-UP**

### **MYTHOLOGIES:**

#### **THE BIRTH AGONIES OF THE CAERION WOLF**

Listen, traveler, and take heed!

If you would venture into the wastes beyond the Sleeping Hills, take care to avoid the Pass of Caerion. For it is haunted by a fierce and feral beast known as the Caerion Wolf.

The creature is tall as a tree at its shoulder, and it moves like a shadow, shifting to smoke and re-shaping itself at will. It is a savage creature which guards the pass jealously, and its haunt is littered with the charred bones of those who dared to make trespass.

Yet the history of the birth of the Caerion Wolf is one both tragic and noble:

In days of old, when the kingdoms of Ur were still young, the lands we now call Perren and the Upper Wastes were home to the nomadic tribes called the Khaerie. They were a proud and honorable race who took from the land only what they needed and then moved on, following the seasons across the plains. Theirs was a proud tradition of bravery and honor. That tradition came to a sudden end when Raiders from the North, called the Brodir, set their sights on the

Upper Wilds. Sped by their powerful war steeds, the Brodir sacked the camps of the Khaerie and slaughtered their warriors as they slept. Their raids pushed the Khaerie further and further south, beyond the Sleeping Hills.

It was there, at the Caerion Pass, where seven of the bravest warriors of the Khaerie made a final stand. Led by the Warlord Tyrus, these brave souls were known as the Wolves of Khaerie. The pass is narrow and treacherous and is filled with many hiding places, which the Seven used to great advantage. For three days and nights, the Seven held off the hordes of the north. But on the fourth day, they were overpowered and captured. Some say there was a spy in their midst who betrayed them to their enemy. Others claim that the Brodir employed witchcraft to deceive the Seven. And still others claim that it was merely the long days of battle, with neither sleep nor food, which brought the warriors their downfall.

Whatever the case, the Brodir's judgment was harsh. They broke through the pass, out into valley below and rounded up hundreds of the Khaerie. The men were slain, their wives and children sold into slavery. But it was for the Seven Wolves that the Brodir reserved their cruelest punishment. Tyrus and his fellow warriors were taken to small wooden hut. There they were bound together in a circle, back to back. And then, with a long leather strap, they were sewn together, rib to rib, their flesh wedded to one another.

In the hut there was but one exit, a small iron door at the mouth of the structure. The Wolves of Khaerie were told that the first man through the door would be granted his freedom and that the others would perish. Then the door was shut and the hut set on fire. The Brodir laughed at their sport. They believed the brave men of the Khaerie would panic and tear each other apart, rend their flesh, each from each, and battle each other to try and exit through the door.

But they did not fight. They did not struggle. Nor did they cry out. They stood fast, brother bound to brother, and greeted their fate in silence. The hut burned and they were consumed by flames. But among the ashes the Brodir were surprised to find no bone, no hair or nail or tooth. Yet the straps that bound the Seven still lay in the ashes, charred and blackened, but unbroken.

Three days hence, when the moons Aros and Pholos were full and fat in the night sky, a terrible howling shook the walls of the Pass. The Brodir quaked at the sound of it. It echoed through the canyons and could be heard as far away as Falzlund.

And the Caerion Wolf stalks that pass to this day, still guarding it against invaders, ready to defend its home against anyone foolish enough to challenge it.